

The Somerset Crane Chronicle

The newsletter of the Great Crane Project

Issue 7
Oct. 2011



Welcome

Welcome to the seventh newsletter of the Great Crane Project - the project that aims to re-establish a population of these magnificent birds in the Levels and Moors and enrich the Somerset landscape in an inspirational way.

2nd batch come to Somerset

17 cranes were successfully reared over the spring and summer and transported to the Somerset release enclosure in early August this year. After three weeks 'anchoring' in the aviaries they were released...



Wh Re Wh leaves the enclosure.
August 2011. John Crispin.

The new batch are very different to last years – being much less tightly bonded as a group and also less bonded to the crane parents. We are not quite sure why this is the case – but it seems to have affected them little, as within only four weeks the young birds became well integrated with the eighteen resident cranes and they were soon flying off to forage as one large flock.



The Somerset Flock.
October 2011.
Trevor Churchill

Why 17 this year ?



Hatchling crane.
April 2011.

We brought 24 viable eggs back to the UK in the spring, but sadly four of the eggs failed to hatch. This might have been caused by the long journey, but mysteriously did not happen the previous year. During the rearing phase there were similar leg growth problems as last year and two birds had to be put down. However, three birds which started to develop leg problems were treated and reached release, thanks to the early intervention and skill of the rearing team.



Olly – R.L.P.

The rearing team were also deeply shocked to enter the pen one morning in late July and find one of the birds, Olly, dead. Post mortem revealed that his skull had been fractured from a stab to the head by one of the other cranes.

Swampy & Mildred

Shortly after release, Blue Yellow White (Swampy) collided with a fence and had to have some treatment for her injuries. Four weeks later we were able to re-release her and she is currently on the verge of joining the other birds. Strangely and miraculously, Black Green White (Mildred) went awol on 6th September and then turned up alive and well on the north Kent marshes some 13 days (and 170 miles) later... Who knows where she will turn up next!

Cranes at Muchelney Abbey

A fantastic display of crane inspired art-work was on show for two weeks at Muchelney Abbey. This was a combination of community and schools works (decoys, papier mache and wire work) as well as the work of professional artists David Brayne, Kitty Hillier, Fiona Campbell and Andrea Clarke. Many many thanks to Somerset Art Works and English Heritage for their support and involvement in this fabulous project.



Crane Sculpture by Isabelle
Huish Academy.
Photo by Ethne Conlin.

Born to Fly

The RSPB film unit have just completed an inspiring and gorgeous film following common cranes on their migration from the Arctic to the Iberian peninsula. Two special screenings are being held on November 30th in Taunton. **Book your seats now on 01392 123456**

Classical Crane Facts

Legends maintain that the greek letters Alpha, Lambda and Upsilon (Α, Λ, Υ) were invented after observing the patterns of cranes in flight.

The Latin word *congruere* meaning an agreement is derived from the 'unified & collective' behaviour seen in cranes – and witnessed in Somerset too. (Cranes are 'Les Grues' in French).

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.