



Welcome and farewell

Welcome to the seventeenth 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.

With the fifth and final reintroduction year complete, this phase of the project is drawing to a close and this will be the final electronic newsletter. However it's not the end of the project and you'll be able to keep up to date with the unfolding story of the Somerset cranes via the Great Crane Project website.

Crane World Fact-file: No 10

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.

Eurasian crane *Grus grus*

As this is the last edition I thought it would be fitting to focus on our very own crane! Better known to us as the common crane, the Eurasian crane is found in over 80 countries which is more than any other species of crane!



Photo by Nick Upton

Its range extends from western and northern Europe all the way across to Mongolia, Siberia and northern China. In the UK the released birds now make up 50% of the resident population - which stands at around 150 birds, with 20 pairs making breeding attempts in 2014.

What a 'Celebration of Cranes'!

On Saturday 22nd November a crowd of several hundred people gathered at the Willows & Wetlands Centre in Stoke St Gregory in anticipation of 'A Celebration of Cranes' - a joint project between Somerset Artworks (SAW) and the Great Crane Project.

Celebrating 5 years since the start of the reintroduction project 'A Celebration of Cranes' brought together artist Sarah Butterworth, local school children and members of the local community to create some fantastic art work, and participate in a procession as part of The Willows & Wetlands' Christmas craft fayre,



The 2 giant crane puppets - photo by Nisha Haq

As dusk fell, the performance began, with a procession of dragonfly lanterns and crane head-dresses sported by the children of North Curry and Stoke St Gregory primary schools. The procession lead down to a courtyard where dancers from Heathfield Community College dressed in crane-costumes performed an intriguing and mesmerizing crane dance. The procession was headed up by two giant, animated, willow crane sculptures with the illuminated throng led by the 'Big Noise Street Band' who provided some fabulously lively and original music that created a wonderful atmosphere.

It was a fitting way to mark 5 years of the Great Crane Project and to end this initial phase.

A massive THANK YOU to everyone involved!

What next for the project?

Although this chapter of the project is coming to a close a new one is about to start. With a total of 65 cranes on the Somerset Levels & Moors the future of the project is bright. With more birds reaching maturity this year it is possible that we could have as many as 17 pairs of cranes setting up territories this spring. With this will come new challenges as nests are located and watched by a team of dedicated species protection volunteers. It is hoped that 2015 will be the year that sees fledged crane chicks on the Somerset Levels and Moors for the first time in over 400 years.



Will 2015 be the year?

Keep updated!

Although this is the last newsletter you can still keep up to date with all things crane on the partnership website and via the links below.



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A brighter future for Somerset's wetlands