

Red-crowned Crane

**Scientific Name:**

Grus japonensis

Range:

Resident population on the Japanese island of Hokkaido, another migratory population on the East Asian Mainland (Russia/China border and the Korean peninsula).

Habitat:

Pasture lands, coastal marshes, rivers, fresh water marshes, rice paddies and cultivated fields

Average Size:

Length: about 5 feet
Weight: 15-22 pounds

Lifespan:

Up to 60 years in captivity

Diet:

Wild: Omnivore – eats small fish, insects, frogs, bulbs, crustaceans, mollusks, roots and seeds.

Zoo: Cracked Corn, vegetables and fruit, fish, meat

Reproduction:

Incubation: 29-34 days

Clutch size: 2 eggs

Appearance:

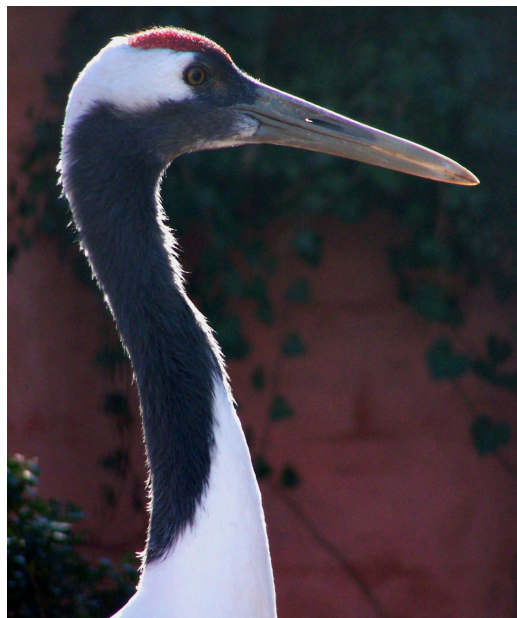
This largest of the crane species is a stunning bird with snowy-white body feathers and black wings. The neck and head also have black markings and the head is topped with brilliant red. The beak in males is usually yellow.

Predators:

Unknown in wild

Population Status:

Critically Endangered

**About the Animal**

The 'red crown' seen in this species is not a crown at all. It is actually an exposed flap of skin used to communicate aggression. By controlling the blood flow to the cap, the crane can cause it to swell.

Red-crowned Cranes are very important to Asian culture. In Chinese, the birds' name is written like this: 丹顶鹤 ('丹' means 'red', '顶/顶' means 'crown' and '鹤/鹤' means 'crane'). The colors red, white and black symbolize vitality, purity and fidelity, respectively. Origami cranes are symbols of longevity and good health. Brides and

grooms often exchange crane-shaped gifts before a wedding.

The population of Red-crowned Cranes is between 1,500 and 2,000 worldwide, making this species one of the most endangered cranes in the world. Efforts to re-introduce hand-reared chicks to wild populations have been very successful.

Mating and Reproduction

Like most cranes, this species has an elaborate courtship 'dance'. The monogamous pair stands side-by-side waving their heads, flapping their wings and leaping into the air. This dance helps to strengthen the pair bond.

Amazing Information

The National Aviary in at one time ran a program where U.S. zoos donated eggs which were flown to Russia and raised in the Khinganski Nature Reserve and released into the wild in order to restore wild crane populations. At this time, reintroduction efforts have been put on hold in order to concentrate on other conservation programs that help wild cranes, such as in-situ education and fire suppression.



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