

White-naped Crane



VERTEBRATA

Order: Carnivora

Family: Felidae

Genus: Panthera

Category: 1 – critically endangered species at the territory of Russia

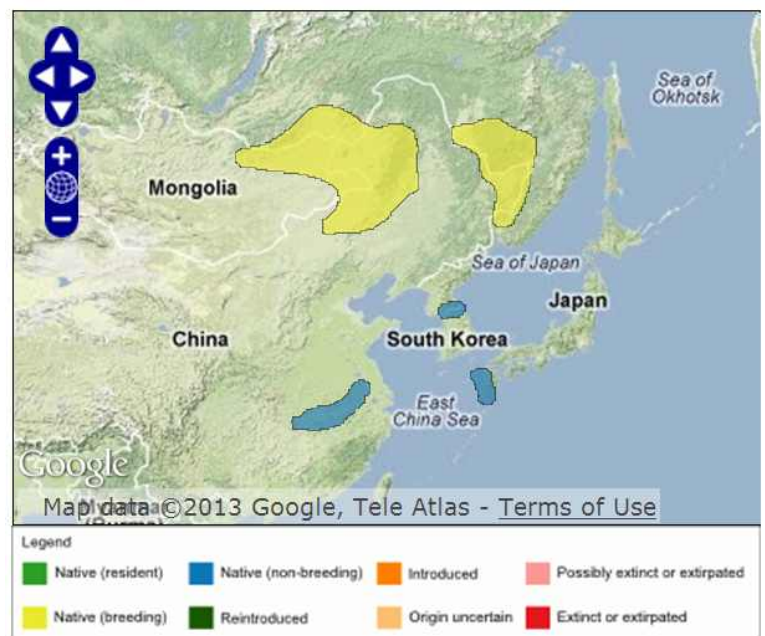
Introduction

The white-naped crane (*Grus vipio*), is a species listed as vulnerable because it is undergoing a rapid and continuing population decline, largely as a result of the loss of wetlands to agriculture and economic development.

Distribution and Population:

White-naped crane breeds in Dauria on the border of Russia, Mongolia and China, the Amur and Ussuri basins on the Sino-Russian border and the Songnen and Sanjiang plains, China. It migrates along the Songnen plain and Gulf of Bohai to its wintering grounds in the Yangtze basin, mainly at Poyang Hu (c.1,000-1,500 individuals), along the Korean peninsula to the Demilitarised Zone in North Korea/South Korea, mainly Cholwon (c.1,900 individuals), and to southern Kyushu in Japan.

Distribution of White-naped Crane



The total population is estimated at 5,500-6,500 individuals, based on estimates of 1,000-1,500 individuals wintering in China, and a 2009 count of 1,920 in Korea (Lee Ki-sup in litt. 2012) and a maximum count of 3,142 in 2009

Source: BirdLife International Species Factsheet (2013)

at Izumi, Japan (S. Chan in litt. 2012). Double counting is possible between the Korean sites and Izumi due to movement of birds during the wintering period.

Physical features and habitats:

White-naped cranes are the only crane species with pinkish legs and a dark gray and white striped neck. The white hind neck and nape, surrounded by an extensively reddish face patch, also serve to identify this species. Adult plumage is dark gray and wings and wing coverts are silvery gray. Males and females are virtually indistinguishable, although in breeding pairs males tend to be slightly larger in size than females. Juvenile's heads and necks are covered with cinnamon brown feathers while the tail and flight feather are blackish gray. The birds are about 130 cm (4 ft) tall and weigh about 5.6 kg (12 lbs.)

Breeding habitat includes shallow wetlands and wet meadows in broad river valleys, along lake edges, and in lowland steppes or mixed forest-steppe areas. White-naped cranes nest, roost, and feed in shallow wetlands and along wetland edges, foraging in adjacent grasslands or farmlands. During migration and on their wintering grounds, they use rice paddies, mudflats, other wetlands and agricultural fields. White-naped cranes are excellent diggers. The white-naped crane is often found in the company of other crane species that also occur within their range, including red-crowned, hooded, demoiselle, and Eurasian cranes.

Unison calling, feather display and dancing are closely associated with courtship and it is generally believed to be a normal part of motor development for cranes and can serve to thwart aggression, relieve tension, and strengthen the pair bond. Nests are mounds of dried sedges and grasses in open wetlands. Females usually lay two eggs and incubation (by both sexes) lasts 28-32 days. The male takes the primary role in defending the nest against possible danger. Chicks fledge (first flight) at 70-75 days.

All cranes are omnivorous. White-naped cranes feed on insects, small vertebrates, seeds, roots and tubers, wetland plants, and waste grains. At the artificial feeding station at Izumi in Japan, whitenaped cranes thrive upon rice and other cereal grains. In the Han River estuary (Korea) and at Poyang Lake (China) they excavate the tubers of several species of sedges.

Priority actions for NEASPEC:

1. Encourage member countries to develop an official conservation network for white-naped crane in collaboration with the existing site network and coordinating activities.
2. Encourage member countries to involve local public in planning and implementation of conservation work as well as local development to reflect their interest and needs and increase habitat so that over-concentration will be avoided.
3. Encourage member countries to strengthen management and improve habitat.
4. Encourage member countries to conduct joint survey or monitoring with neighbouring countries.
5. Encourage member countries to conduct joint research on habitat assessment.
6. Support member countries to work together in capacity-building on habitat management, population management, monitoring and research, law enforcement, environmental education and community development.
7. Promote awareness raising on conservation needs of the species in each Government as well as general public and international community.
8. Improve and strengthen management of habitats and species.