



Wattled Crane

Bufo carunculatus

The Wattled Crane is a large, grey and white crane with distinctive whitish wattles below the chin edged by red at the front. The belly is black as are the legs and feet. The eyes are orange-yellow and the bill light reddish brown.

HABITAT

The Wattled Crane requires wetlands for both breeding and foraging. Permanently inundated wetlands with primarily sedge-based vegetation are preferred.



FOOD

The Wattled Crane is primarily a specialised vegetarian, foraging in wetland habitats for sedge, rhizomes, water-lilies, nutgrass and water grass. It also feeds on grasshoppers, crickets and locusts.

BREEDING

Wattled Cranes mainly breed in winter between May and August, although breeding activity has been recorded in all months of the year. Nets are constructed in permanently saturated wetlands. The Wattled Crane's reproductive rate is low. Pairs may lay either one or two eggs in a clutch, laid at three to four day intervals. However only one chick is raised. The incubation period is 36 to 40 days.

STATUS

At present there are more or less 240 Wattled Cranes in South Africa. THEY ARE CLASSIFIED AS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED.

THREATS

Habitat destruction and alteration – Wetland habitat loss is due to mining, forestry, crop farming, overgrazing, drainage/damming of wetlands and industrial developments.

Poisoning – This can occur through intentional poisoning of cranes that cause crop damage. This can also occur unintentionally when farm workers bait grain for gamebirds.

Power lines – Cranes are injured or killed when colliding with power lines.

HOW WE HELP:

The African Crane Conservation Programme of the Endangered Wildlife Trust focuses on crane habitat conservation, conservation-based scientific research, environmental education and awareness, risk assessments and threat mitigation and reducing unnatural crane mortalities.

For queries, donations or to report a sighting in your area, phone 011-3723600 or email: crane@ewt.org.za.

To learn more about the Endangered Wildlife Trust please visit our website: www.ewt.org.za

