

# Sarus crane

India is a diverse country, home to a vast array of bird species that are both unique and magnificent. With a variety of habitats, including forests, wetlands, grasslands, and deserts, the country provides a habitat for over 1300 species of birds. India is famous for its endemic bird species like Indian Peafowl, Indian Roller, Indian Pitta, and Indian Paradise Flycatcher, among many others. Some of the rare and endangered species of birds found in India are the Great Indian Bustard, Siberian Crane, and White-Bellied Heron. The country also boasts of several bird sanctuaries and national parks, including the Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, and the Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, where one can witness the beauty of these winged creatures in their natural habitats. Whether you are a seasoned birdwatcher or a casual observer, India is a perfect destination to indulge in the beauty of the diverse avian species.

The Sarus crane, with its stately silhouette and graceful movements, is a bird of rare elegance and beauty. Its slender neck, elongated legs, and powerful wingspan make it a wonder to behold, a creature that seems to have been crafted by an artist's hand.

In flight, the Sarus crane is a master of the skies, soaring effortlessly over wide open spaces and marshy wetlands, its call a haunting melody that echoes across the landscape. On land, it is a study in poise and grace, stepping delicately through the grasses with the quiet dignity of a noble.

Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	Sarus crane
2	Scientific name	Grus antigone

3	Colour	Grey plumage with contrasting red head and upper neck, and white feathers on the lower neck and upper breast
4	Average length	150-180 cm
5	Average height	152-180 cm
6	Type of bird	Wetland
7	Found in India in states	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Rajasthan, and Haryana
8	Habitat	Wetlands, marshes, and agricultural fields
9	Status	Vulnerable

## Features

The Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*) is a large bird that is native to parts of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and northern Australia.

Sarus cranes are the tallest flying bird in the world, with adult males standing up to 1.8-1.9 meters (5.9-6.2 feet) tall and females slightly smaller. They have long legs, a long neck, and a broad wingspan of up to 2.4 meters (7.9 feet).

As mentioned, the head and upper neck of the Sarus crane are bright red, while the rest of its body is mostly gray. The tips of their wings are black, and their eyes are a striking shade of red.

They are the tallest of all flying birds. Adult males can reach a height of up to 1.8-1.9 meters (5.9-6.2 feet) tall, while females are slightly smaller. Sarus cranes are also quite long, with an overall length of up to 1.8-1.9 meters (5.9-6.2 feet) from beak to tail.

# Habitat and Food

Sarus cranes inhabit wetlands, marshes, and paddy fields, preferring areas with shallow water, tall grasses, and reeds. They can be found in a range of environments, including floodplains, rice paddies, and freshwater lakes. In India, they are known to breed in open, marshy areas with tall grasses, and they have also been observed in urban parks and gardens.

Sarus cranes are omnivorous birds, and their diet consists of a variety of foods. They feed on plant matter such as roots, tubers, seeds, and fruits, as well as insects, fish, and other small animals. They forage in shallow water and mud, using their long, pointed beaks to probe and pick up food. Sarus cranes are also known to use their feet to disturb the bottom of shallow water and flush out small fish and crustaceans. During the breeding season, they may consume more insects to provide their young with the necessary protein for growth.

# Nesting and Nurturing

The Sarus crane is a large bird that is found in parts of Asia, including India, Southeast Asia, and Australia. It is known for its elaborate courtship dance, as well as its impressive nesting habits and parental care.

Sarus cranes typically build their nests in wetlands, such as marshes, swamps, or riverbanks. They create a platform of sticks and vegetation and often build it up so that it is above the water level to protect their eggs from flooding. Both male and female cranes participate in building the nest.

Sarus cranes typically lay two eggs per clutch, although they may lay up to three. The eggs are laid a few days apart and both parents take turns incubating them.

The eggs are generally pale greenish or creamy white in color,

with brown or grey speckling. Sarus crane eggs are quite large, measuring around 90-100 mm in length and 60-65 mm in width. The eggs take around 30-35 days to hatch, with both parents taking turns incubating them.

After hatching, the chicks are covered in down and are able to leave the nest within a day or two. However, they stay close to their parents and are carefully guarded and fed by both males and females. The parents also teach the chicks how to forage for food and protect themselves from predators. The chicks remain with their parents for around 9-10 months before becoming independent.

## **IUCN Status**

The Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*) is a species of crane that is listed as “Vulnerable” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Sarus crane is the tallest flying bird in the world and is found in wetlands and agricultural fields across the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

The Sarus crane faces numerous threats to its survival, including habitat loss and degradation due to agriculture, human development, and urbanization. The species is also vulnerable to hunting and poaching, as well as pesticide poisoning and electrocution from power lines.