

EAST AFRICAN CROWNED CRANE

Order: Gruiformes Family: Gruidea
Balearica regulorum gibbericeps

Description: Slate-grey with white, black, and chestnut markings; a top-knot of stiff golden bristles. The bill is shorter than in other cranes.

Status: Non-threatened

Height: 4 feet

Habitat: The largest concentrations are found in marshes and grassy flatlands near the rivers and lakes, but also inhabit cultivated land.

Range: Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and eastern Zaire.

Diet: Plants, seeds, grain, insects, frogs, snakes, small fish and the eggs of water animals. They stamp as they walk, flushing insects to eat.

Social Organization and Behavior:

They are gregarious, often living in family flocks of over 100. Cranes mate for life but the remaining partner takes another mate when one dies. The summons for its mate comes from a 5-foot long windpipe that gives the crane their powerful trombone-like call that can carry for miles.

During the breeding season, cranes are known for their elaborate courtship dance with each other. The dance is outstanding as the crowned crane prances with wings outstretched to display its feathers, struts about and jumps high into the air.

They spend their entire day looking for food. At night, the crowned crane spends its time in the trees sleeping and resting.

