

Demoiselle Crane

Anthropoides virgo



Class: *Aves*

Order: *Gruiformes*

Family: *Gruidae*

Characteristics:

Like all cranes, demoiselles have the characteristic long neck and long legs. However, unlike many cranes they have a fully feathered head. They have variant grey plumage and a distinct white line that extends from the corner of their eye to the back of their head. These feathers tend to elongate past the head.

Behavior:

This is a fully migratory species that will travel vast distances in search of food. They have one of the toughest migrations in the world, flying at altitudes up to 26,000 feet over the Himalayas.

Reproduction:

Typically, demoiselles breed during their local rainy season and if reproduction is successful they tend to be monogamous. Like most cranes, they perform elaborate mating dances to attract a mate. Their nest consists of a few sticks or rocks placed on bare ground. Both sexes incubate most often two eggs for 27-29 days. The young fledge after about 60 days, which is a short time for cranes. They have a high degree of parental care. Both sexes will feed and care for the young (Maryland Zoo).

Diet:

Wild: Plant material, seeds, invertebrates, lizards and small fish

Zoo: Greens, capelin, feline diet, crane pellets

Conservation:

Demoiselle cranes have an extremely large range and therefore are not considered to be vulnerable. Their primary threat is habitat loss due to agriculture.

FYI:

Demoiselles are the smallest of the cranes.

One village (Khichan) in Rajasthan, India has taken to feeding thousands of demoiselle cranes as they pass through on their annual migration.



Range & Habitat:

Grasslands and agricultural fields close to water sources throughout eastern Asia. They will winter in northern Africa, India and Pakistan.



Lifespan: up to 65 years in captivity, around 25 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Cranes are the tallest flying birds in the world.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

