

Crane

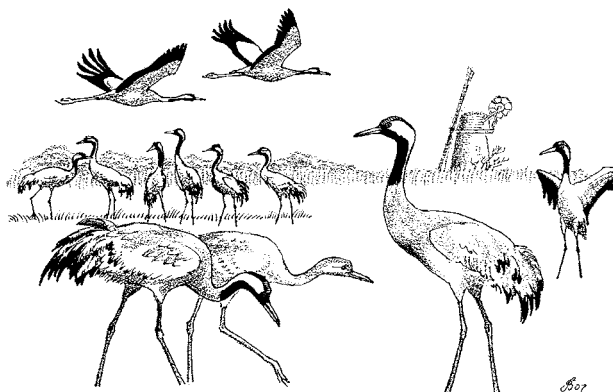
Grus grus

NBA 1999–2007	SUMMER: ALL/BREEDING	WINTER
TETRAIDS OCCUPIED	17 (1%) / 4 (<1%)	15 (1%)
SUMMER/WINTER ONLY	9	7
MEAN PER OCCUPIED TETRAD	2 / 1	12
SUMMED MAX COUNTS	28 / 4	187
POPULATION ESTIMATE	2–9 bp	11–36

PREVIOUS ATLASES	SQUARES OCCUPIED	1999–2007	LOSSES	GAINS
1968–72 (10 KM)	none	1 (2%)	0	1
1980–85 (TETRAD)	1 (<1%)	4 (<1%)	0	3
1980–85 (10 KM)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)		
1981–84 WINTER (10 KM)	2 (3%)	4 (6%)	0	2
1988–91 (10 KM)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)		

THE CRANE BREEDS from Fenno-Scandia and the northern part of central Europe eastwards to central Siberia. As a result of hunting and wetland drainage in the Middle Ages, the European range and population of Cranes began to decrease. During the last 30–40 years, however, it has begun to reoccupy some of its former haunts and, since 1981, at least one pair has bred or attempted to breed in Norfolk, the first in Britain for many centuries.

Cranes need large undisturbed wetlands in which to breed and, as the nest is built on the ground, the nest-site has to be inaccessible to potential ground predators. For this reason the birds select soft, waterlogged, marshy ground, the nest being built up well above the water table.



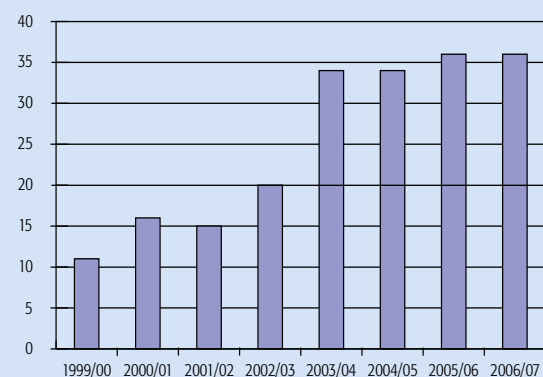
After arriving in Norfolk in the autumn of 1979, a pair remained and attempted to breed in Broadland in 1981 but the chick that hatched was predated. However, successful breeding occurred in the following year. At least two pairs bred annually in Norfolk during the NBA summers, with in 2006 five pairs definitely nesting and four additional pairs possibly breeding. Although Cranes are gregarious for much of the year, breeding pairs are generally solitary and have large nesting territories. Nest failure may result from predation by Marsh Harriers or Bitterns, but foxes are the greatest threat at both the egg and nestling stages.

The NBA summer map does not show the breeding distribution at tetrad level, although the general nesting location is widely known. Each spring singles, pairs or small groups of Cranes are recorded flying west around the Norfolk coast, before returning to the Broads the same day or a few days later. Some remain to feed on marshland in north Norfolk, where they have been mapped. The other occupied tetrads include one that took up residence at Pensthorpe, having been attracted by the captive birds there, and birds that bred at Lakenheath Fen, across the border in Suffolk, in 2007.

In winter, Cranes feed in open, but preferably inaccessible, fields and grazing marshes. The NBA winter map shows that as in summer, they are concentrated in a small part of northeastern Broadland. The Norfolk

WINTER TOTALS

Winter count totals 1999–2007
(data from *NBR*)





DAVID TIPLING

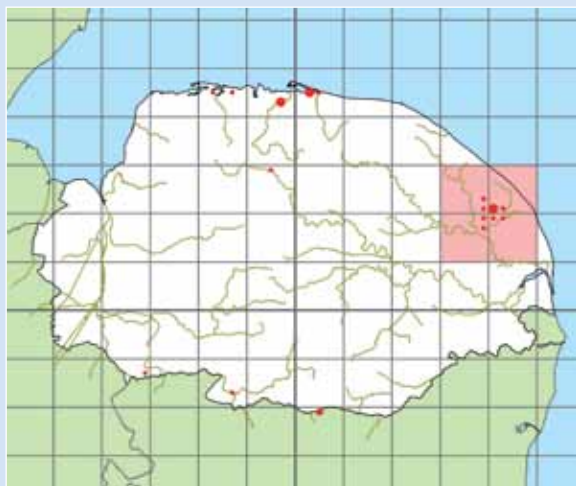
winter population exceeds the total of local adults and their offspring. This was especially true during the winter of 2004/05, when the Broadland flock reached 24 in December 2004 but had increased to 34 by January 2005. A party of three seen arriving off the sea at Scolt Head in September 2004 suggests a Scandinavian origin

for at least some of these extra birds. The following winter, a juvenile that was present in Broadland in December was thought to be from one of the pairs that had bred in Yorkshire in 2005.

An almost sequential pattern of growth in winter peak numbers in Norfolk was evident during the NBA period.

SUMMER

Small dots 1, medium 2, large 3-7 ('pairs')
 Shading - breeding proved, dots centralised within 20-km square



WINTER

Small dots 1-3, medium 4-12, large 13-34 (birds)

