



Highest Number of Cranes in the UK in 400 Years!

What are cranes?

- The crane is the tallest bird in the UK, rising to a height of up to 1.6m.
- The RSPB says they like to feed on seeds, insects and snails. Cranes pass through the south and east of England during May and April.

The number of cranes is soaring once again in the UK, according to the [RSPB](#). The bird protection group says that the population is the highest in 400 years!

The UK Crane Survey has said that, in 2019, there were 56 breeding pairs of the long-necked [wading](#) bird in the UK. There are around 200 individual cranes in total.

So, what's behind the crane comeback? Well, the RSPB says that it's down to the dedication of [conservation](#) groups.

These groups have been working hard to improve wetland habitats. Cranes have been spotted at Lakenheath nature reserve, in Suffolk. They've also been seen at Nene Washes, near Peterborough. Some groups have even [reared](#) baby cranes to prepare them for life on the Somerset Levels, in south-west England.

Cranes were once a common sight across the UK. In fact, Cranfield, a town in England, gets its name from the term 'a field of cranes'.

In the middle ages, people thought crane was a luxury food. There's even evidence of some kings of England eating it at this time.

Habitat destruction and hunting, however, meant that the number of cranes began to plummet. All this meant that, by the 1600s, these birds had become extinct in Britain.

In the 1970s, cranes started to return to the Norfolk Broads. Since then, conservation groups



Photo: Crane numbers are increasing in the UK.

have worked to encourage more cranes to return to the UK.

In 2010, the Great Crane Project was set up. It has worked on developing and improving crane habitats. Today, the RSPB says there is one breeding site but its location is kept a secret.

Wildlife groups welcomed the news. Andrew Stanbury, an RSPB conservation scientist said, "We are delighted to see crane numbers continuing to recover." Other conservation groups have also welcomed the news. Chrissie Kelley, a conservationist said, "We are thrilled to see wild cranes doing so well."

Glossary

RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in the UK.
wading	To walk through water.
conservation	The act of protecting species in the wild.
reared	Cared for until an animal has become an adult.