

Crane Ringing

8 of a 9 part brochure series



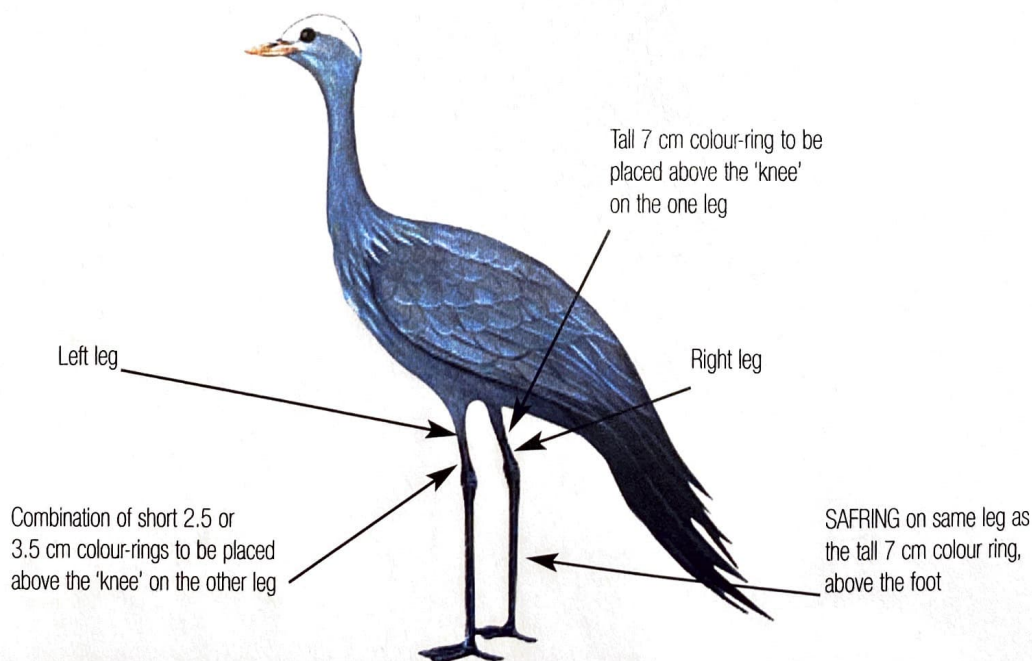
What is the purpose of a crane colour-ringing programme?

The Blue, Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes all exhibit some degree of nomadic and migratory movement within South Africa. These movements, however, are not well known or understood. Colour-ringing and the subsequent observation of these marked birds are cost-effective methods to monitor these movements and determine movement patterns.

How are cranes ringed?

- Crane chicks are ringed just before they can fly

- All colour-rings are placed above the 'knee' (the anatomical ankle) of the crane. *See diagram*
- A tall 7 cm colour-ring is placed on one leg, this can be on either leg, identifying the area where the bird was hatched. Blue, green, orange, white, yellow and red are the colours used for this
- A unique colour combination of short 2.5 or 3.5 cm colour-rings is placed on the other leg, enabling identification of individual birds from a distance. *Cover pic*
- A metal SAFRING (South African Bird Ringing Unit) ring





2 Crane ringing kit used to ring Grey Crowned cranes
Cover Every ringed crane has a unique colour code



3 A Blue Crane chick ready for release after being ringed

is placed above the foot of the crane on the same leg as the 7 cm colour ring. This ring has a unique identification number, which can only be read when the bird has been captured or has died

What information can be obtained from a resighting?

- The KwaZulu-Natal region – by the color of the large ring
- Specific location of hatching
- Age of crane
- Movement distance and direction over time
- Mortality rates

How can landowners and bird clubs help in the programme?

The areas over which cranes range or move are vast. The more observers there are out in the field, the better. More observers also increase the chance of resighting colour-ringed birds. EVERY resighting is an invaluable record adding to our knowledge of crane movements and aspects of breeding biology (e.g. age at first attempted breeding).

What to report when seeing colour-ringed cranes

- Crane species
- Colour-ring combination on each leg e.g. short red

over blue on left leg and tall blue on right leg

*** Please note: the legs of the crane are taken as if you are the crane – its right leg is the right leg in the colour combination*

- Date
- Time
- Location – district; farm name; and GPS coordinates if possible
- Habitat and land use practices
- Behaviour – roosting, feeding, nesting, flocking
- Flock size
- Contact details of observer

Please note that the SAFRING ring is usually not visible in the field, but check for metal rings on injured or dead birds.

Please forward any resightings or rings from dead birds to:

SAFRING (South African Bird Ringing Unit)
 Avian Demography Unit, University of Cape Town
 Rondebosch, 7701

Tel: (021) 650 2421 Fax: (021) 650 3434

Email: safring@adu.uct.ac.za

or contact the EWT on details provided below

This brochure series has been developed for farmers and the public to use in conserving the three cranes species and their habitats. For more information about EWT and cranes, call (011) 486 1102 or email crane@ewt.org.za

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