

## CRANES

### Order GRUIFORMES

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FOR the purposes of this work it will be sufficient to state that the cranes differ from the storks, to which they have a strong superficial resemblance, by the fact that the hind toe is always raised above the level of the other three. From the herons and bitterns they differ in the absence of the peculiar " powder-down " patches, and in the non-serration of the inner margin of the claw of the middle toe.

Cranes are long-legged birds of considerable size, with the bill equal to, or rather longer than, the head, the sides of which are ornamented, in many species, with patches of specialized feathers.

The inner secondaries are also ornamental, longer than the primaries, broadened, dependent and pointed.

The eggs are spotted in almost all species, not plain.

The order comprises about twenty existing species, with many fossil forms ; it is found in Europe, Africa, Asia, extending to North Australia, and in North, but not South, America.

Only the following species occurs within our limits.

#### *Megalornis antigone sharpii*

##### **The Burmese Sarus Crane**

*Grus (Antigone) sharpii*, Blanford, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, v., 1895, p. 7 (Burma).

*Grus antigone*, Oates in Hume's *Nests and Eggs Ind. Birds* (2nd ed.), iii., 1890, p. 372.

*Antigone antigone* (part), Sharpe, *Cat. Birds, Brit. Mus.*, xxiii., 1894, p. 264.

*Grus sharpii*, Blanford, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds*, iv., 1898, p. 189.

*Antigone sharpei*, Oates, *Cat. Birds' Eggs, Brit. Mus.*, ii., 1902, p. 94.

*Antigone antigone sharpii*, Robinson and Kloss, *Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam*, v., 1921, p. 72 ; Stuart Baker, *Faun. Brit. Ind., Birds* (2nd ed.), vi., 1929, p. 56.

**Malay Name.**—Burong keria (*Kedah*) : nok karian (*Siamese*).

**Description.**—Except for a small patch of grey feathers covering the ears and a scanty crop of coarse hair-like black feathers, the head, and the neck for about half its length, are naked, the crown smooth but the other parts papillose. Whole of the plumage dark ashy grey, except the bastard wing, primary coverts and primaries, which are black. There is no marked difference in colour between the sexes.

*Immature.*—Not seen by us but said to have the head and neck clothed with rusty or buff-coloured feathers.

**Soft Parts.**—Irides, reddish orange; bill and coronal skin, greenish glaucous; skin of the face and neck, pale brick-red; legs, fleshy pink, brownish in front (*Wardlaw-Ramsay*).

**Dimensions.**—Total length, about 50 in.; tail, 10 in.; wing, 24 in.; tarsus, 10 in.; bill from gape, 6.5 in. *Females* are slightly smaller.

**Range in the Malay Peninsula.**—Occurs only in the north, where Robinson observed it near Chumporn in April 1919. In some districts in Trang it appears to be not uncommon. It is recorded from Sétul by Mr A. W. Hamilton, and also known from Perlis, Patani, and as far south as Kuala Kangsar in Perak. Specimens from Penang in the British Museum are almost certainly from the mainland. The bird is kept in captivity by the natives of Trang.

**Extralimital Range.**—From Assam, through Burma and Siam to the north of the Malay Peninsula; the south of French Indo-China. The paler, typical race occurs in India (not in the south) and also, according to Mr Stuart Baker, in West Assam.

**Nidification.**—Not known to breed in the Peninsula, and we must therefore rely on the observations of other authors. In Burma, eggs have been taken in August and September; in Assam earlier than this. The nest is usually placed in the middle of a swamp and is a conical mass of reeds, etc., the one or two eggs being laid in a depression on the top of the nest, the bottom of which is sometimes under the water. The eggs are white, sometimes tinged with green, with brown blotches and greyish secondary markings. The birds are courageous in defence of their nests.

**Habits.**—In the northern parts of the Peninsula, where this crane is not uncommon, it is found on dry rice stubbles and on wide open plains, singly or in pairs. It is a shy bird with a loud trumpeting cry.