

📅 09/10/2024

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Escaped crane causes culling controversy

An escaped **Red-crowned Crane** that has paired with a wild **Common Crane** in Denmark should be captured or killed, according to BirdLife Denmark (DOF).

The conservation body has also recommended that the same action be applied to the two hybrid young that the pair has produced this summer.

The statement has attracted great controversy in Denmark, with heated debate breaking out between those agreeing or disagreeing with DOF's stance. Many believe that the bird should be allowed to remain wild and that interference with the crane family is an example of humans "playing god". However, others are strongly supportive of the position held by DOF.



The escaped Red-crowned Crane (left) with its Common Crane partner and two hybrid young (Tim Hesselballe Hansen via DOF).

Threat to local cranes

Red-crowned Crane is native to Japan, China and far eastern Russia and is classified as Vulnerable by IUCN. The world population is small, with only some 2,300 mature individuals found across its range. The species has never been recorded as a wild vagrant in Europe.

The particular Red-crowned Crane in Denmark escaped from Skærup Zoo south of Vejle in June 2020 and has been living wild since. This year, the bird paired with a wild Common Crane and went on to breed successfully.

However, conservationists are concerned about the impact that the mixed pairing could ultimately have on Denmark's breeding Common Crane population.

Knud Flensted, biologist at DOF, explained: "Ideally, the adult Red-crowned Crane should be captured and returned to its zoo and included in a breeding program for this rare species. The two hybrid chicks may be sterile, but they should be euthanised to prevent genetic contamination of the local Common Crane population. It is sad if it becomes necessary to kill the Red-crowned Crane, but it is better than the consequences of a fauna contamination of our domestic population of cranes."

Karina Schou, who runs Skærup Zoo, has said that luring the bird back has proved a challenge due to its "shy and fast" behaviour.

Peter Kyvsgaard of the Danish Environmental Protection Agency said that the organisation is investigating the legal options and clarifying what role the it should have in any action.



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Comments (11)

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- Steve Lister** · 2 weeks ago at 16:59 PM

The right thing would be to capture it and the young. No reason to kill them.

👍 11 Likes
- Harshith Karthik Parthiban** · 2 weeks ago at 17:21 PM

I agree with Steve, after all they are birds and dont deserve to die

👍 4 Likes
- Christopher Reynolds** · 2 weeks ago at 20:57 PM

I agree that capturing the cranes and keeping them in captivity is preferable to R euthaisinh Ising them.

👍 2 Likes
- Clara Jay** · 2 weeks ago at 13:17 PM

And probably a zoo which acquires funding/promotes the conservation/breeding of rare species. They should be using their resources to capture and contain it, not kill it.

👍 4 Likes
- Richard Butler** · 4 days ago at 17:16 PM

I agree with all the comments above. To kill any birds for such a reason is unacceptable, let alone one of a 'vulnerable;' species, even if it was an escape from a zoo. It is obviously fertile and should be breeding in the zoo to improve the chances of keeping the species alive. There is no acceptable reason for killing the two offspring, catch them if necessary to keep in the zoo but they should not be killed.

👍 1 Like
- James Wood** · 4 days ago at 18:39 PM

Yes this crane needs to be either captured or ultimately killed.This interbreeding would never have happened if this crane hadnt escaped from captivity.But you cant allow the genetic purity of the indigenous crane species to be affected.If the birds cannot be captured then sadly killing would be the only option before next years breeding season.

👍 1 Like
- James Wood** · 4 days ago at 18:41 PM

Im actually never seen that these two species have interbred.They normally would never even meet,yet they seem to have recognised each others mating ritual.

👍 1 Like
- David Tomlinson** · 4 days ago at 18:41 PM

It seems that capturing the crane is much easier said than done, otherwise it would have already been taken back into captivity.

👍 3 Likes
- James Wood** · 4 days ago at 18:43 PM

I think zoos and bird collections should be prosecuted for any bird that escapes.It shows a lack of zoological husbandry.All they have to do is cut its primaries once a year,or ensure they are in escape proof pens.

👍 1 Like
- Doug Simpson** · 4 days ago at 19:00 PM

Nobody here has mentioned the quality of life of the young birds if they were captured for retention in captivity. Providing them with suitable accommodation where they could live a natural life is clearly a difficult task - hence the escape. Taking fully fit young birds from the wild for retention in a non-natural situation is an anathema to me. If the purists must have their way, I believe that the fairest thing to do would be to euthanise them. My personal preference would be to leave them free, given the possibility that they might be sterile and, therefore, not a genetic issue.

👍 1 Like
- Geemeff Geemeff** · 13 minutes ago

This is the country that euthanised Marius the giraffe - remember him? So why would they treat this family any differently. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marius_\(giraffe\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marius_(giraffe))

👍 0 Likes

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